

Testimony on HB 2613

Presented to House Judiciary Committee

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Chairman Kinzer, Vice-Chair Bruchman, members of the committee, I am Elizabeth Saadi, State Registrar for vital event records at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill 2613.

As you are aware, KDHE is responsible for registering, maintaining, and issuing records for all vital events occurring in Kansas, including stillbirths. In 2013, a total of 201 stillbirths were submitted to the Office of Vital Statistics. On average, 12 certified copies of stillbirth certificates are requested and fulfilled annually.

House Bill 2613 separates statutory language for the filing of stillbirths from the filing of all other deaths and establishes certain requirements for this new certificate. There are several questions regarding language in this bill that KDHE requests be clarified:

- Under New Section 2(a) (page 1, line 13), the bill mirrors language for the filing of deaths by stating, “The funeral director or person acting as such” when referring to who first assumes custody of a stillborn child and registers a certificate with the state registrar. For stillbirths, the hospital personnel typically begin the registration of the certificate. We recommend that the new section language state, “The **hospital administrator**, funeral director or person acting as such who first assumes custody of a stillborn child...”
- New Section 2(b)(3) requires changes in two major areas that alter information available on stillbirths in Kansas.
 - Page 1, line 25, the bill states this certificate shall contain “a first name, middle name, last name, no name, or combination of these.” **The option of “no name” should be removed** since the Office of Vital Statistics must at a minimum have a last name in order to file, retrieve, and issue a record.

- Page 1, line 27, regarding issuance of these certificates, HB 2613 states that “the certificate shall not contain any information regarding the “fetal death”. We interpret this to mean that only the demographic information regarding a stillbirth is to be issued. This provision would diminish the information available to a family requesting the certificate. Kansas currently provides demographic and medical information on the stillbirth. To remove the medical information from the issued certificate would be disallowing information some parents may wish to acquire for medical history or other purposes. In the absence of the information currently available, families will have to seek information from medical providers regarding the demise of their unborn child.
- Page 1, line 28, information surrounding the demise of the unborn child may be collected by KDHE, but does not make it mandatory, as is current law for filing stillbirth certificates. Not requiring information regarding fetal death would greatly impede the ability of the public health community and researchers to study the causes of unborn child demise. KDHE recommends the language in the bill be changed to continue to require the filing of the cause of this information, and that such information be certified by a physician or coroner.
- Section 3 (c) (Page 2, line 17) changes the definition of stillbirth from “in excess of 350 grams” to “gestational age of which is not less than 20 completed weeks.” Changing this definition for reporting stillbirths aligns with the latest recommendations from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Thus, KDHE recommends a definition for gestational age be incorporated into the bill. Language could align with K.S.A. 65-2401 or K.A.R. 28-56-1.
- Finally, we recommend two definitions be incorporated into the bill. These include a definition of birth and gestational age. World Health Organization standard definitions would be applicable.

I raise these questions to assure your intent for this process is preserved and provides KDHE with the capacity to ensure continuity of reporting by the appropriate source.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I will now stand for questions.